BAHAMAS

COUNTRY PROFILE

**IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21:
REVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, 1992**

**Information Provided by the Government of The Bahamas to the
United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
Fifth Session
7-25 April 1997
New York**

United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development
Division for Sustainable Development
The Information contained in this Country Profile is also available on the World Wide Web, as follows:
http://www.un.org/dpcsd/earthsummit

E/CN.17/1997/Misc.66

97-12227

BAHAMAS

This country profile has been provided by:

Name of Ministry/Office:
The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST)
Office of the Prime Minister

Date: 17 March 1997

Submitted by: Catherine M. Benjamin (for) Permanent Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister

Mailing address: P.O. Box CB-10980
West Bay Street
Nassau
The Bahamas

Telephone: (242) 327-4691-3

Telefax: (242) 327-4626

E-mail: nbs@batelnet.bs

Note from the Secretariat: An effort has been made to present all country profiles within a common format, with an equal number of pages. However, where Governments have not provided information for the tables appended to Chapters 4 and 17, those tables have been omitted entirely in order to reduce the overall length of the profile and save paper. Consequently, there may be some minor inconsistencies among the formats of the different country profiles.

All statistics are rendered as provided by the respective Governments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ACRONYMS		iii
FACT SHEET		v
AGENDA 21 CHAPTERS		
2.	International cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries and related domestic policies	1-2
3.	Combating poverty	3-4
4.	Changing consumption patterns	5-8
5.	Demographic dynamics and sustainability	9-10
6.	Protecting and promoting human health	11-12
7.	Promoting sustainable human settlement development	13-14
8.	Integrating environment and development in decision-making	15-16
9.	Protection of the atmosphere	17-18
10.	Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources	19-20
11.	Combating deforestation	21-22
12.	Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought	23-24
13.	Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development	25-26
14.	Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development	27-28
15.	Conservation of biological diversity	29-30
16.	Environmentally sound management of biotechnology	31-32
17.	Protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources	33-38
18.	Protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources: application of integrated approaches to the development, management and use of water resources	39-40
19.	Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, including prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products	41-42
20.	Environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, including prevention of illegal international traffic in hazardous wastes	43-44
21.	Environmentally sound management of solid wastes and sewage-related issues	45-46
22.	Safe and environmentally sound management of radioactive wastes	47-48
23-32.	Major groups	49-54
33.	Financial resources and mechanisms	55-56
34.	Transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building	57-58
35.	Science for sustainable development	59-60
36.	Promoting education, public awareness and training	61-62
37.	National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building in developing countries	63
38.	International institutional arrangements	64
39.	International legal instruments and mechanisms	65-66
40.	Information for decision-making	67-68

ACRONYMS

APELL	Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level
CFC	chlorofluorocarbon
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research
CILSS	Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ELCI	Environmental Liaison Centre International
EMINWA	environmentally sound management of inland water
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GAW	Global Atmosphere Watch (WMO)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEMS	Global Environmental Monitoring System (UNEP)
GEMS/WATER	Global Water Quality Monitoring Programme
GESAMP	Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution
GIPME	Global Investigation of Pollution in Marine Environment (UNESCO)
GIS	Geographical Information System
GLOBE	Global Legislators Organisation for a Balanced Environment
GOS	Global Observing System (WMO/WWW)
GRID	Global Resource Information Database
GSP	generalized system of preferences
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAP-WASAD	International Action Programme on Water and Sustainable Agricultural Development
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
IBSRAM	International Board of Soil Resources and Management
ICCA	International Council of Chemical Associations
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
ICPIC	International Cleaner Production Information Clearing House
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ICSU	International Council of Scientific Unions
IEEA	Integrated environmental and economic accounting
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGADD	Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development
IGBP	International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (ICSU)
IGBP/START	International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme/Global Change System for Analysis, Research and Training
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INFOTERRA	International Environment Information system (UNEP)
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPCS	International Programme on Chemical Safety
IPM	integrated pest management
IRPTC	International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals
ITC	International Tin Council
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization

ACRONYMS (Cont'd)

IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGRFA	plant genetic resources for agriculture
PIC	prior informed consent procedure
SADCC	South African Development Co-ordination Conference
SARD	sustainable agriculture and rural development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRO	Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNU	United Nations University
WCP	World Climate Programme (WMO/UNEP/ICSU/UNESCO)
WFC	World Food Council
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (also called World Wildlife Fund)
WWW	World Weather Watch (WMO)

FACT SHEET

BAHAMAS

1. Key National Sustainable Development Coordination Mechanism(s)/Council(s).
The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST)
Office of the Prime Minister

Contact point (Name, Title, Office): Mrs. Lynn P. Holowesko, Ambassador for the Environment; Mrs. Catherine M. Benjamin, Deputy Permanent Secretary

Telephone: (809) 327-4691/3 **Fax:** (809) 327-4626 **e-mail:** nbs@batelnet.bs

Mailing address: P.O. Box CB-10980, Nassau, The Bahamas
Courier: Sir Cecil Wallace Whitfield Centre, Cable Beach, The Bahamas

2. Membership/Composition/Chairperson: Chairman: H.E. Mrs. Lynn P. Holowesko, Ambassador for the Environment. Members: Directors of: Agriculture; Fisheries; Environmental Health Services; Physical Planning; Director General of Tourism; Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance; President, The College of the Bahamas; Senior Hydrologist, Water and Sewerage Corporation; Executive Director, Bahamas National Trust.
2a. List of ministries and agencies involved: Standing Committees of BEST: National Conservation Strategy; National Land Use; Biodiversity Implementation; Biodiversity Data Management; Climate Change; Environmental Safety; Science and Technology; International Obligations. Other agencies involved: Departments of: Lands and Surveys; Meteorology; Public Works; Legal Affairs; Port Department; National Disaster Office; Bahamas Electricity Corporation; Bahamas Telecommunications Corporation; Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation; Geographical Information Systems Unit, Department of Public Works; Department of Archives.

2b. Names of para-statal bodies and institutions involved, as well as participation of academic and private sectors:
Quasi-Government: Water and Sewerage Corp.; College of The Bahamas; Academic: College of The Bahamas; Ministry of Education; Private Sector: The Bahamas National Trust - individual citizens and residents.

2c. Names of non-governmental organizations: The BEST Commission is still in the process of formation; therefore, this represents a partial list only: national: The Bahamas National Trust; international: (a) Research Institutions: Bahamian Field Station, San Salvador, The Bahamas (Centre for Archaeological and Biological Studies); Forfar Field Station, Blanket Sound, Andros; Bimini Biological Field Station, Bimini, The Bahamas (University of Miami, Miami, Florida); CMRC Field Station, Lee Stocking Island, George Town, Exuma, The Bahamas (Caribbean Marine Research Centre, West Palm Beach, Florida); Bahamas Environmental Research Centre, Staniel Cay, Andros, The Bahamas (George Mason University, Virginia); (b) Individual Scientist/Researchers: Dr. Allen Bolten, Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research, Department of Wildlife, Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida; Dr. Hardy Eshbaugh, Professor and Curator, Department of Botany, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio; Dr. G. Carleton Ray, Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia; Dr. Alexander Sprunt, Vice President of Research, US Audubon Society; Dr. Katherine Sullivan; The Nature Conservancy, University of Miami, Miami, Florida.

3. Mandate role of above mechanism/council: to coordinate efforts to protect the environment, to implement sustainable development practices and to advance the use of science and new technology in order to foster a more progressive society.

4. If available, attach a diagram (organization chart) showing national coordination structure and linkages between ministries: N/A.

Submitted by
(Name): Catherine Benjamin **Signature:** Signed.

Title: Deputy Permanent Secretary **Date:** 17 March 1997

Ministry/Office: Office of the Prime Minister

Telephone: (809) 327-4691 **Fax:** (809) 327-4626 **e-mail:** nsb@batelnet.bs

BAHAMAS

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ACCELERATE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND RELATED DOMESTIC POLICIES (with special emphasis on TRADE)

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT:

Currently, the primary sources of technical assistance are the IDB, the GEF, European Union, UNEP, OAS, PAHO and CFTC. In addition, The Bahamas benefits from technical assistance offered by UNESCO, ILO, UNCTAD, IMO, ICAO, WMO, ITU and UPU. It also receives assistance from regional organisations such as CARICOM, U.W.I. Centre for Environment and Development (UWICED), the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute, the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Commonwealth Caribbean Medical Research Council.

Assistance includes seminars and technical meetings, documentation and technical information, support for human resource development and the strengthening of national institutions. It also includes short-term and long-term consultancies for policy formulation, drafting of legislation and transfer of expertise and technology and improvements in administration and management capabilities. There are also programmes for small business development.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** The Technical Assistance Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates all technical assistance and training programmes offered by International and Regional Organisations. Financial assistance is processed through the Ministry of Finance.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** Major improvements have been made to the national capacity to respond to requests for information and statistics.

3. **Major Groups:** No information.

4. **Finance:** The Bahamas receives financial assistance from the European Union, the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** Assistance is provided through various regional institutions.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 3: COMBATING POVERTY

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT:

- Focus of national strategy

The Bahamas has no programmes which solely focus exclusively on combating poverty per se. However, virtually every programme formulated by The Bahamas Government has the needs of the least advantaged in mind.

It is the objective of the Government to improve the quality of life for all nationals but, in particular, those who fall below the poverty level. This can be reflected in the Government's programmes to encourage investment and development to create employment opportunities, education, health care, child care, housing, etc.

- Highlight activities aimed at the poor and linkages to the environment

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** Decisions are taken by officials responsible for the particular areas in question. Major programmes are referred to the Cabinet for approval.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** No information.

3. **Major Groups:** Given the fact that The Bahamas is a small country with a population of approximately 260,000 inhabitants, most issues are discussed at the central level. In addition to Government's efforts, major groups working to combat poverty are various church groups, private sector organisations and women's groups.

4. **Finance:** As programmes are an integral part of each Ministry's work schedule, funds are provided in the annual budget by sector.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** No information.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1986	1989	1992	1995	
Unemployment (%)	12.2	11.7	14.8	11.1	
Population living in absolute poverty					
Public spending on social sector %	46.9	43.1	46.4	45.0	
Other data					

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 4: CHANGING CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT:

- **National policy objectives/focus**

The Bahamas has not held a policy discussion on consumption at the national level, but emphasis is placed on the reduction of waste and increasing energy efficiency in the transport sector. The Central Government is responsible for most policy initiatives. The Bahamas has not been involved in any bilateral or multilateral initiatives in the area of consumption patterns.

- **National targets**

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** No information.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** No information.

3. **Major Groups:** No information.

4. **Finance:** No information.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** No information.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1985	1990	1992	Latest 199_
GDP per capita (current US$)	9,057	12,290	11,587	
Real GDP growth (%)	13.5	4.8	1.0	
Annual energy consumption per capita (Kg. of oil equivalent per capita)	2,570[a]	2,529	2,280	
Motor vehicles in use per 1000 inhabitants	245.5	308.6		

Other data

a = 1989

BAHAMAS

Government policies affecting consumption and production.

1. Goals and Agents (Stakeholders)

Indicate with a (✓) those agents which your Governments policies are meant most to influence.

Agents / Goals	Producers	Local authorities	Central Government	Households	Civil society
Material efficiency					
Energy efficiency:					
Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing				✓	✓
Other					
Waste:					
Reduce	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reuse					
Recycle					

Comments:

2. Means & Measures and Agents (Stakeholders)

Indicate with an (R) those agents who assume primary responsibility for any of the policy measures indicated; indicate with an (I) the agents for which the impact is expected to be especially significant.

Means & Measures / Agents	Producers	Local authorities	Central Government	House-holds	Civil Society
Improving understanding and analysis					
Information and education (e.g., radio/TV/press)	I		R	I	I
Research			R		
Evaluating environmental claims			R		
Form partnerships		R	R		
Applying tools for modifying behaviour					
Community based strategies		R	R		
Social incentives/disincentives (e.g., ecolabelling)	I		R		
Regulatory instruments	I		R	I	
Economic incentives/disincentives	I		R		
Voluntary agreements of producer responsibility for aspects of product life cycle	R		R		
Provision of enabling facilities and infrastructure (e.g., transportation alternatives, recycling)	R		R		
Procurement policy					
Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing performance					
Action campaign		R	R		
Other (specify)					

Comments:

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 5: DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministries of Health and Environment and Social Development and the Department of Statistics are engaged in integrated policy coordination in the field of environment and development policies and population. The BEST Commission has taken steps to coordinate matters in the field of environment and sustainable development. The Ministry of Health and the Department of Statistics have conducted population programmes.

The Government supports NGOs working in this area including The Bahamas Family Planning Association (population activities) and The Bahamas National Trust (environment). Public information activities are undertaken to raise awareness of the linkages among population, environment and sustainable development, particularly in relationship to preparations for and follow-up to the Cairo Conference. There are no bilateral or multilateral initiatives in the area of population and sustainable development in which the Government has been involved.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: The Ministries of Health and Environment, Social Development and Statistics are most directly concerned with demographic issues. The BEST Commission is comprised of all public and private agencies responsible for the environment and sustainable development.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: The Bahamas Government has made considerable effort to develop mechanisms to ensure capacity building in the areas of the environment and technology training.

3. Major Groups: See under STATUS REPORT.

4. Finance: The Government has provided resources needed to develop capacity and provide training.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: See under STATUS REPORT.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1990	1993	1995	
Population (Thousands) mid-year estimates	255	269	279	
Annual rate of increase (1990-1993)		1.8		
Surface area (Km^2)		13,878		
Population density (people/Km^2)	18	19	20	
Other data				

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 6: PROTECTING AND PROMOTING HUMAN HEALTH

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: Access to primary health care is considered to be very good in The Bahamas.

Basic health care is available to all people living in The Bahamas with treatment available for almost all illnesses and conditions. The population of The Bahamas continues to experience improvements in many areas of health. Life expectancy at birth has been steadily moving from about 60 years in the early fifties to approximately 73 years in the early nineties.

The Bahamas is an archipelagic nation where population of approximately 260,000 is concentrated on 20 islands with over 65% living in New Providence Island which has three hospitals, eight community clinics and one satellite clinic. On the other 19 islands, there are one hospital, 49 community clinics and 53 satellite clinics.

There are approximately 430 doctors, 88 dentists, 446 registered nurses, and 450 clinical nurses in total. The hospitals (three public, two private) have a total of 1,100 beds. The public hospitals treat approximately 420,000 outpatients annually.

Contributing to the goal of providing the best health care, the Government sponsors health education programmes throughout the country addressing all matters including means to maintaining a healthy lifestyle and adopting a healthy nutritional basis.

Those nationals, living in the Family Islands, who require health care may receive treatment from clinics and will be flown into New Providence for hospital care if needed. Major steps have been taken to address environmental health concerns including garbage collection and pollution.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** No information.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** No information.

3. **Major Groups:** No information.

4. **Finance:** No information.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** No information.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1980	1990	Latest 199_
Life expectancy at birth			
Male	63.5	67.5	
Female	71.2	74.9	
Infant mortality (per 1000 live births)	29	26	
Maternal mortality rate (per 100000 live births)	24[a]	21[b]	
Access to safe drinking water (% of population)			
Access to sanitation services (% of population)			
Other data			

[a] 1981/84 [b] 1985/89

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 7: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: A Family-Island Infrastructure Study is proposed for 1997. It will include an inventory of existing infrastructure facilities and identify priority infrastructure projects in support of environmentally sound economic activities in islands in The Bahamas archipelago.

The Bahamas has continued its efforts to provide reasonable housing for its population. On the Island of New Providence, where over 65% of the population lives, there has been a number of low-cost housing projects. In 1996, the Government completed 184 houses in Phase C of the Flamingo Gardens and Faith Avenue Subdivision and the Cox Street Housing Development.

Work is still ongoing on 89 houses in the Jasmine Gardens and Tall Pines Estates and construction of 442 houses is to commence in the first quarter of 1997 in Emerald Gardens, Pastel Gardens and Olive Gardens. There are plans for the further development of low cost housing throughout the most heavily populated areas of New Providence.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** No information.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** No information.

3. **Major Groups:** No information.

4. **Finance:** No information.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** No information.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1990	1995	
Urban population in % of total population	83.6		
Annual rate of growth of urban population (%)	2.4		
Largest city population (in % of total population)	67.6		
Other data			

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 8: INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN DECISION-MAKING
(See pages vii and viii at the beginning of the profile)

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST) is responsible for coordinating activities for sustainable development. A major step in the process of integrating environment and development in decision-making has been the introduction of the mandatory requirement for Environmental Impact Assessments to be carried out with respect to all development projects. This has been done to ensure that all future work will be designed to ensure sustainable development.

The National Conservation Strategy Task Force in the BEST Commission is developing a National Strategy and Action Plan which will be incorporated into the nation's legal framework.

The BEST Commission's Committee on International Obligations is mid-way through an in-depth study of all the obligations under each Convention ratified by The Bahamas with a view to coordinating all sustainable development issues. The main constraints to the implementation of international legal instruments related to sustainable development have been the lack of resources, technical expertise and funding. The BEST Commission is establishing an administrative and legal process to identify the relationships and overlaps between such agreements.

Legislation is to be drafted to ensure that regulations are in force to support the provisions of these conventions.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure (please also refer to the fact sheet): The BEST Commission, comprising all environmental agencies as well as individual ministries and departments, participates in the decision-making process.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: The Government is continually trying to increase capacity building by recruiting additional staff, purchasing equipment, providing training in all areas and sending individuals to international fora who represent the broadest possible spectrum of environmental activities in The Bahamas.

3. Major Groups: All groups in The Bahamas (men, women, public and private sector, white, blue and brown collar workers, etc.) benefit from decisions taken to protect the environment to ensure the right of the people to their natural heritage.

4. Finance: No information.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The Bahamas takes advantage of every opportunity to interact with countries in the region in environmental issues largely through assistance provided by regional entities such as the UNEP Regional Office, OAS, UWICED, etc.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 9: PROTECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE

NATIONAL PRIORITY: Very high

STATUS REPORT:

The Montreal Protocol and the London and the Copenhagen Amendments were all ratified on 4 May 1993.

- The latest report to the Montreal Protocol Secretariat were prepared in 1996.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was signed in 1992 and ratified in 1994.

Additional comments relevant to this chapter

The Bahamas contributes little to the global net release of greenhouse gases but, like all small states, is severely threatened from the possible effects of climate change, especially through rising sea level followed by floods, coastal flooding and erosion. The Government promotes policies and programmes in the areas of energy efficiency, environmentally sound and efficient transportation, industrial pollution control, sound land use practices, sound management of marine resources and management of toxic and other hazardous wastes. Studies have also been undertaken on air pollution and ozone layer depletion, the most recent being the 1995/96 Bahamas Ozone Country Study.

As a result of decisions taken at the Second Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC, a GEF funded project has been initiated, enabling The Bahamas to fulfil its commitments to UNFCCC. A national inventory of greenhouse gas emissions will be undertaken by conducting a stocktaking and inventory exercise augmented by the collection of background information. Further, the project is expected to assist in the identification of options to meet the objectives of the Convention and the preparation of a National Plan and a National Strategy for the Convention in The Bahamas. Finally it will produce the initial national communication to the Conference of the Parties. It is also envisaged that the peculiar status of The Bahamas, as a small island developing state vulnerable to climate change, will be highlighted.

In the area of environment and transport, only some ad hoc observations of emissions have been carried out. The BEST Commission's Committee on Environmental Safety is vested with the responsibility of investigating the entire issue of emissions and making recommendations for national policy and legislation. The Environmental Court has been established where those found guilty of pollution and related acts will be prosecuted and heavily fined. The Government gives very high priority to the use of EIA for all developments. Environmental Audits are also accorded the highest priority.

High priority in the transport sector is given to the use of safe technologies, and, in the energy production sector, for the rehabilitation and modernization of power systems and the use of EIA. At this stage, the Government is unable to give priority to research and development relating to appropriate methodologies, use of endogenous technologies, product labelling aimed at informing about energy efficiency and fuel efficiency, or to life cycle analysis of products.

In the electric power sector, a review has been undertaken of both current energy supply mixes and feasibility of energy sources. There is a punitive tax structure in place to encourage the purchase of more energy efficient vehicles of less than 2.5 litre engines. This is an indirect energy/emissions-related tax. Since Rio, the Government has tried to expand and improve the performance and safety of the mass transportation system. In order to decrease pollution and increase safety, the following issues have been addressed in part: relative cost-effectiveness of alternative systems, transportation technologies, establishment of mass transit systems, impacts on the environment and safety. Compared with other countries in the region, the Bahamas would rate the current transportation system equal in terms of relative cost-effectiveness of alternative systems, transportation technologies, establishment of mass transit systems, environmental quality and safety.

Since The Bahamas is not a net emitter of greenhouse gases, there is no need to develop or modify land or marine based practice in this regard to become more "resilient to atmospheric changes and fluctuations". The Bahamas, however, does support conservation and the preservation of its marine and land resources as is evident in the creation of The Bahamas National Trust and the extensive marine and land park system. Policy and procedures are being developed relative to the phase-out of CFCs or other depleting substances. The Government has established and strengthened early warning systems and response mechanisms with particular reference to hurricanes. Due to financial constraints, there is no early warning system or response mechanism for transboundary air pollution resulting from industrial accidents or natural disasters.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST) is responsible for coordinating activities in this sector. The following individual Commission members are responsible for day-to-day monitoring: Departments of Environmental Health Services, Fisheries, and the Ministries of Transport and Public Works. They are full-fledged members of the National Coordination Mechanism for Sustainable Development. A special Climate Change Committee has been established by BEST, headed by a Commission member, to implement the provisions of UNFCCC. National legislation to protect the atmosphere has not been reviewed in the light of Agenda 21.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: The national early detection system, the national capacity to predict changes and fluctuations, and the national level capacity building and training to perform systematic observations and assessment are all rated "good". Training opportunities in the area of transboundary atmospheric pollution control have not been provided. There is at present no capacity for observation and assessment, research or information exchange in this field.

3. Major Groups: The BEST Commission and all of its members, including The Bahamas National Trust, and the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Bahamas National Trust actively promotes sustainable development. Other quasi-government entities involved in this field are the Chamber of Commerce, Grand Bahama Port Authority, Bahamas Electricity Corporation.

4. Finance: The Government has received support and assistance amounting to US$eq. 20,000.00. The Bahamas is participating in the OAS-CPACC Project and might allocate US$ 300,000 - 500,000 to the project.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The Government has not taken any initiative within the framework of the United Nations and its regional commissions to convene regional conferences on transportation and the environment. The Bahamas cooperates closely with UNEP on the scientific basis for decision-making, promotion of sustainable development, prevention of stratospheric ozone depletion and transboundary atmospheric pollution. For the promotion of sustainable development, it works closely with the Organization of American States (OAS). The Bahamas sits as a member of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1980	1990	Latest 199-	
CO_2 emissions (eq. million tons)				
SO_x "				
NO_x "				
CH_4 "				
Consumption of ozone depleting substances (Tons)				
Expenditure on air pollution abatement in US$ equivalents (million)				

Due to financial constraints, the Government participates neither in strengthening the global observing system at the national level nor in the Ozone Observing System.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 10: INTEGRATED APPROACH TO THE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: The Bahamas is seeking to formulate, with regional and international cooperation, comprehensive land-use plans, regulations and economic incentives to promote sustainable land use, improve land-tenure and administration systems and support reforestation programmes. While preparation of the comprehensive plan for the main island of New Providence has been deferred, it still remains a priority area for the Government. As a prelude to this, the Ministry of Public Works (responsible for urban and regional planning) has engaged consultants who have prepared as a first component, a Land Status Map, which is an inventory of lands approved for development through the subdivision approval process. The zoning of these lands will also be indicated. Also included in this study is the identification of social, economic and environmental issues involved in land development on New Providence. The second component of this contract will yield terms of reference for preparation of a comprehensive land use plan for New Providence in the short- or medium-term that will seek to resolve some of these issues. The first component was scheduled to be completed by 31 January 1997.

Information gathering on land use and preparation of base maps has begun for the island of San Salvador. This process will feed into the preparation of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for this island which is considered a "hot spot" for future development. Completion is anticipated by autumn of 1997.
Development of the long-range Planning (Research) Section of the Department of Physical Planning is crucial to improving land management effectiveness. Databases are being developed for the following:

Subdivisions	- land use, zoning, services availability
Building Permits	- applications for building permits, compliance with Town Planning Guidelines,
Home Occupation Uses	- small-scale commercial uses in some residential areas.

The use of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports to support development applications for large projects has increased over the past three years. Two key requirements to ensure the sustainable use of land resources are (a) an effective planning system which provides long and short-term frameworks for the allocation of land among competing uses, and (b) mechanisms to evaluate and monitor proposals for development. Planning at this level requires extensive databases, surveys and analysis and clear policy definition. These are areas which have been lacking in the Bahamas.

Progress has been made with the introduction of a new Geographic Information System by the Ministry of Finance and Planning. In finding rational solutions to equip decision makers with information which would promote sustainable development in The Bahamas, it was recognised that GIS technology is the information system which may be utilised to manage a wide range of land resource/spatial applications. High national priority was therefore given to the development of an "Enterprise Wide G.I.S." in a multi-agency environment with technical assistance provided by the Inter-American Development Bank and funding and technical assistance provided by the Japanese Government.

The overall objective of The Bahamas National GIS Project is geared to strengthening the GIS Unit (anticipated new name: The GIS Centre) and to expanding the use of GIS technology in Government agencies. It was therefore decided that The Bahamas Government would proceed with the B.N.G.I.S. Project as a forerunner to an overall land use project. The problems that have mitigated against the effective guidance and control of the use of land have been identified as follows: weak town planning legislation, weak institutions responsible for control and land development, particularly in the Family Islands, and a dearth of data. Action is now being taken to correct these weaknesses particularly in respect to data collection. Preparation of a comprehensive Land Use Plan and Enforcement Instrument is a top priority for New Province and the major Family Islands. This is a major undertaking but is needed to complement the land use/transportation study now in progress.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: Present legislation is relatively weak and does not provide a sufficiently strong backing for planning to be effective in The Bahamas. Related to this is the shortage and dispersal of qualified personnel responsible for the management of land resources. The new legislation being prepared seeks to redefine the meaning of the term "development" to include mining and engineering operations and, most notably, deforestation. Increased penalties have also been suggested for violations.

The establishment of The Bahamas Environmental, Science and Technology Commission in 1995 and its subcommittee, the National Land Use Committee (NLUC) in 1996, are important developments affecting the management of land resources in The Bahamas. While the interdisciplinary composition of the NLUC allows for cross-sectoral discussions of land use issues, it is still a new unit and its role in formulating or influencing land use policy is still being refined. The introduction of Local Government throughout the country will also have a major effect on matters relating to land use.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: Staff have returned to post following overseas training in urban design and building environment. Facilities have been upgraded to increase capacity for automation of records to facilitate development of land use agencies.

3. Major Groups: No special mention.

4. Finance: No information.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: See under STATUS REPORT.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 11: COMBATING DEFORESTATION

NATIONAL PRIORITY:	Significant	

STATUS REPORT: Commercial felling of timber from the pine forests commenced in The Bahamas with the issuance of the first timber licence in 1906. Logging continued uninterrupted with subsequent licences up to 1974, when all licensed rights were relinquished to the Crown. After this period, natural regeneration occurred and there has been only local and sporadic felling in more recent years. Consideration is now being given to finalisation of a position regarding the implementation of the non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles, adopted by the UNCED, for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The absence of specific forestry legislation is the principal barrier to the more effective and sustained development of forestry in The Bahamas. Until such time as the drafted legislation is enacted, no effective management strategies can be implemented. It is recommended that a programme to protect, manage, and harvest forests on the basis of sustained yields be established. Whether the forests are then harvested for lumber or for pulpwood will be a matter of Government policy. A programme of selective thinning of pine forests is needed, as it is essential to maintain forest cover in designated areas to conserve and protect wildlife. This will entail the establishment of saw-mills. Saw-mill operation could be undertaken by the private sector, but felling would need to be monitored by a strong Forestry Department. Attention must also be given to the coppice lands.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: The absence of specific forestry legislation is the principal barrier to more effective and sustained development of forestry in The Bahamas. New forestry legislation will be introduced in 1997. Specific proposals recommended are: (a) appointment of a Conservation Officer, (b) formation of a system of inter-departmental liaison, (c) setting up of an Environmental Affairs Committee under the Ministry of Agriculture, and (d) establishment of a Cabinet Committee to supervise the phased development of a land use policy.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: More effective measures and approaches are often required for development of technical and multidisciplinary skills, forestry extension and public education, research capability and support, administrative structures and mechanisms, and dissemination of information and public relations.

3. Major Groups: More effective measures and approaches are often required for participation of the general public, especially women and indigenous people, involvement of youth, roles of the private sector, local organizations, non-governmental organizations and cooperatives.

4. Finance: Sustainable annual funding by the Government to the Forestry Unit is paramount to the success of the implementation of forestry development programmes and longevity of the natural forest resources.

Financial and technical assistance for specific forestry development programmes can be sought from international and regional lending agencies as IDB, World bank, GEF, IMF, CDB, and forestry conventions and protocols.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: Linkage and cooperation is established between The Bahamas Forestry Unit and Forestry Departments throughout the Caribbean and the Americas, the FAO Committee on Forestry, the Latin American and the Caribbean Forest Commission, the Commonwealth Forestry Association, the Standing Committee on Commonwealth Forestry, the Institute of Tropical Forestry, and the Oxford Forestry Institute, in various facets of forestry development.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1985	1990	Latest 199-	
Forest Area (Km^2)	2,122	2,122	1,980	
Protected forest area				
Roundwood production (solid volume of roundwood without bark in mill m^3)	-	-	-	
Deforestation rate (Km^2/annum)	+/- 5	+/- 5	+/- 5	
Reforestation rate (Km^2/annum)				

Other data:
Approximately 142 km^2 of pine forest lands have been transferred to the Department of Agriculture for agricultural development on three out of the four pine islands of The Bahamas.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 12: MANAGING FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS: COMBATING DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

NATIONAL PRIORITY: Not applicable

STATUS REPORT:
The International Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification Particularly in Africa has not been ratified.

Additional comments relevant to this chapter

Not applicable.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** Not applicable.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** Not applicable.

3. **Major Groups:** Not applicable.

4. **Finance:** Not applicable.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** Not applicable.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1980	1990	Latest 199_
Land affected by desertification (Km^2)			
Other data			

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 13: MANAGING FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS: SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL PRIORITY:	**Not applicable**	
STATUS REPORT: Not applicable.		

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** Not applicable.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** Not applicable.

3. **Major Groups:** Not applicable.

4. **Finance:** Not applicable.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** Not applicable.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 14: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: Agricultural production is being increased through more efficient use of land and increasing the amount of land under cultivation in a strategy aimed at a combination of import substitution and increased share of export markets. The short and long term objectives of the planned agricultural expansion are to increase export earnings (thereby continuing to diversify the economy), to increase employment opportunities and to achieve greater self sufficiency in food supplies. Much of this expansion will be in fruit crops (especially citrus) and vegetables for export. Continued expansion in livestock agriculture is also expected but primarily for the local market. An expansion in food processing activity is also envisaged, in parallel with the expansion in production.

The Bahamas recognizes that agricultural expansion must be made compatible with the maintenance of biodiversity. This will require the creation of buffer zones and limitations on the use of pesticides. Lease agreements encourage environmentally friendly patterns of land use by offering incentives to leave shelter belts and not to cultivate areas of unusual biodiversity. Particularly important is (a) the protection of wetlands, where adjacent to agriculture areas, and (b) the protection of freshwater resources from contamination by fertilizer nutrients, pesticides and animal wastes. Since much of the projected agricultural expansion will depend on good quality water for irrigation, it is a matter of self-interest for the agricultural sector to protect water resources. Already, agricultural land, and land for forestry and conservation, are being set aside.

The Bahamas is located in the hurricane belt and is vulnerable to their devastating effects. In 1992 Hurricane Andrew caused severe salt intrusion on one of the major farming areas. More recently, heavy rains following Hurricane Lili in 1996 led to flooding of land with consequent leaching of fertilizer and delay in replanting. In addition, tornadoes, waterspouts, droughts, fire, flooding and other disasters, periodically plague the agricultural sector. Contingency plans with infrastructural support are being developed. Given the permeability of the soils, and indeed of the parent rock, agro-chemicals are readily leached into the freshwater lenses, which supply water needed for agricultural, industrial and domestic uses. No scientists, engineers and technicians are directly engaged in research and experimental development efforts.

It is estimated that on an annual basis five to ten persons assist indirectly in activities sponsored and funded by academic non-national efforts in various endeavours covering the marine and terrestrial environment. Recent developments elsewhere in bio-technology, including tissue culture and rapid propagation techniques, will be adopted here in order to preserve endangered species and develop sustainable agricultural programmes. Agricultural research will be strengthened to improve service to the agricultural community. Better transportation and communications among the dispersed islands will be needed for the full development of the Family Islands in order to facilitate access to markets. The thin soil and limestone substrate increases land preparation costs and will be addressed by research and the development of appropriate technologies.

Additional requirements include institutional strengthening through improved training, data management and research capability; review and introduction of comprehensive natural resource legislation and management programmes, especially in forestry and wildlife; monitoring of compliance with provisions in agricultural leases; introduction of comprehensive pesticide legislation, with a certification programme for pesticide applicators; strengthening and modernization of marketing, communications and transportation infrastructure; and introduction of a comprehensive programme for the control of exotic plants and animals. Immediate requirements include the upgrading of facilities and training in all areas; the collection of data on feral dogs, cats, pigs and their effect on habitat and biodiversity depletion; training in pesticide monitoring and evaluation; and a review and strengthening of legislation to improve plant and animal quarantine so as to exclude, as far as possible, exotic pests and diseases, and to protect endangered and threatened species.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: Given the competing demands for limited land resources including urban use, agriculture, forestry, tourism and conservation, a national land use policy is being formulated. Legislation regulating the import and use of pesticides is being developed. Forestry legislation has been drafted under which extensive areas, including mangrove forests, would be declared "conservation forests".

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: Given the fragility of the Bahamian ecosystem, the most challenging problem facing sustainable development is a comprehensive programme of human resource training. Aging farmers and low entry level participation threaten the long-term viability of the sector; especially in the absence of outreach programmes to adopt new technologies and to attract new and younger entrants to the sector.

3. Major Groups: No information.

4. Finance: No information.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The Bahamas has recently become affiliated with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). A tentative collaborative work programme is still being developed, but may include an analysis of the agricultural sector, a youth programme and assistance with the establishment of farmer's organisations. A project proposal has been submitted to FAO for an analysis of agricultural policy and legislation.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1985	1990	1994
Agricultural land (Km^2)			203.4
Agricultural land as % of total land area			1.5
Agricultural land per capita			729.0
	1989/90	**1992/93**	**Latest 199_**
Consumption of fertilizers per Km^2 of agricultural land as of 1990			

Other data: In 1994/5, the estimated value of agricultural production was $43 million. Of this total, $22 million came from crops and $20 million from poultry and eggs. Crop exports were valued at $14.5 million. Most of this came from grapefruits (nearly 12,500 short tons) and cucumber (5,000 short tons).

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 15: CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

NATIONAL PRIORITY: To enhance public awareness of the importance of biological diversity and to develop a national strategy and action plan.

STATUS REPORT:

The Convention on Biological Diversity has been signed in 1992 and ratified in 1993. Latest report was submitted in 1996.

Considerable progress is being made in the development of a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, which will be completed in 1997. A Biodiversity Data Management Project is at present actively engaged in identifying data on all components of biodiversity. The Bahamas Government has made the submission of EIAs a mandatory requirement for all projects which are likely to have significant adverse effects on biological diversity. In addition to reports submitted to CSD and UNEP, The Bahamas Government will submit to CBC/COP in early 1998 its first national country report covering measures taken relative to the implementation of the Convention.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora was ratified in 1979, the latest report was submitted in 1996.

The Bahamas is taking appropriate measures to enforce regulatory provisions and prohibit trade in specimens in violation of those regulations. With reference to the requirement to prepare periodic reports on its implementation of the Convention and to prepare an annual report listing export permits issued and species involved, the latest report submitted by The Bahamas was in 1996 (in respect of 1995). In 1995, a total of 73 import permits were issued, 58 of these for birds (principally parrots, macaws and cockatoos) and 15 for orchids. Also, 47 export permits were issued. Of these, 12 were for research samples (feathers or blood samples from turtles or iguanas) and 17 for exports of conch meat or products and shells.

Additional comments relevant to this chapter: Over the past five years, there has been increasing recognition of the significance of biodiversity to The Bahamas. This was originally viewed as the creation of national parks for conservation of wild species of plants and animals. However, many sectors of the country, both public and private, have come to realise its importance in the tourism, agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors. Biodiversity has also been recognized as a principal source of food, especially on the Family Islands, in the form of substance harvesting.

The Government is taking steps to coordinate monitoring and widen public awareness of the economic values and importance of managing biodiversity sustainably so as to ensure continued use. Poaching remains a problem. Not only is the poaching of fish a continuing concern, but also the poaching of snakes and iguanas for the pet trade. Orchids are also being depleted by collectors. The Government is active in taking steps to coordinate monitoring and regulate activities which impact on biodiversity. It is seeking to widen public awareness of the value and importance of biodiversity. It is also exploring possibilities through which The Bahamas may derive further economic benefits through the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Towards this end the Government of The Bahamas established The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST) in 1995. The Commission, which is headed by the Ambassador for the Environment, comprises representation from public and private sector institutions responsible for areas relative to the environment, science and technology. Aspects of the Commission's work are undertaken by a number of committees, including on International Convention Obligations, Biodiversity Data Management, National Land Use, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Climate Change, Environmental Safety, Science etc. The Commission is the focal point for all international environmental conventions and agreements.

The Bahamas is a participant in two UNEP projects funded by GEF, namely the Biodiversity Data Management Project and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Project. With the support of GEF/UNEP, The Bahamas completed the Biodiversity Country Study in 1995 with significant upgrading and revision in 1996.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: Natural resource protection legislative initiatives and action go back for generations accelerating during and after World War II. From 1959, the Bahamas began setting aside major land and seabed areas to guarantee the survival of its most critically threatened or endangered species in conjunction with a statutorily created Bahamas National Trust and since then there have been no known extinctions. Existing legislation protecting wildlife include the Wild Animal Fisheries Act and the Bahamas National Trust Act. A list of all Bahamian legislation relating to environmental issues is provided under Chapter 39 of this Country Profile.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: The Bahamas proposes to develop a biotechnology industry based on the use of its biological resources. This will include the development of science based courses, programmes and equipment at The College of The Bahamas.

3. Major Groups: NGO activities have already created a framework for conserving and/or managing the use of many forms of terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

4. Finance: The Bahamas has received several grants totaling $500,000 to establish its programme on Biodiversity.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The Bahamas has been selected by UNEP as one of ten countries to serve as a model for the implementation of the Biodiversity Convention and for the development of pilot studies on biodiversity with the College of The Bahamas.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS			
	1992	Latest 199_	
Protected area as % of total land area	8.9		
	1990	Latest 199_	
Number of threatened species	33		
Other data			

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 16: ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL PRIORITY:	
STATUS REPORT: The Bahamas is presently exploring the application of biotechnology to the protection and sustainable use of its reserve of biological resources. This includes the application of tissue culture to the possible exploitation of plants and marine organisms for pharmaceutical purposes. The Bahamas also proposes to draft legislation to ensure equitable returns for the exploitation of Bahamian biodiversity by foreign entities, to protect intellectual property rights, and to provide safeguards against the uncontrolled release of living modified organisms.	

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** Agencies involved in decision-making in the BEST Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** Representatives of the BEST Commission, particularly technical officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, have attended various workshops related to this subject. In addition, The Bahamas has had the benefit of expertise from representatives of International Organisations visiting the Bahamas who have conducted detailed briefing sessions in Nassau.

3. **Major Groups:** Agriculture and fisheries administrators, farmers and fishermen.

4. **Finance:** No budget for this specific purpose.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** See under CAPACITY-BUILDING / TECHNOLOGY ISSUES.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 17: PROTECTION OF THE OCEANS, ALL KINDS OF SEAS, INCLUDING ENCLOSED AND SEMI-ENCLOSED SEAS, AND COASTAL AREAS AND THE PROTECTION, RATIONAL USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR LIVING RESOURCES

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT:

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea was ratified in 1983.

See also the attached tables on the next pages.

As a result of its geographic configuration, the protection of the ocean is of considerable importance to The Bahamas as the archipelago covers 100 sq. miles, 90% of which is water.

The Bahamas has planned: (1) a national policy on oceans which will be integrated into the National Sustainable Development Plan; and (2) an integrated coastal area management programme. To ensure protection, a number of conventions have been signed in recent years. However, The Bahamas has found many difficult to implement and accurate compliance in some is a challenging task.

Precautionary measures have been taken with respect to marine and coastal activities. It is now official policy to require an Environmental Impact Assessment prior to any major activities and/or development projects. If developers are guilty of negative practices, permits to operate are revoked. The same applies to fishermen, and heavy fines are applicable to cruise ships and boat owners for failure to comply with the laws and regulations.

The Government has access to technologies that serve to identify the major types of pollution of the marine environment from land-based sources. There are data bases used by the Department of Fisheries and the College of the Bahamas for integrated coastal management/information purposes.

A Biodiversity Data Management data base is being developed by the BEST Commission with GEF/UNEP assistance. The Government has rated the existing data bases adequate, and they cover the following: resources, cultural and socio-economic characteristics, activities, uses, habitats, protected areas, coral reef ecosystems, wetlands including mangroves, sea grass beds and other spawning and nursery areas. They do not cover marine degradation caused by land-based activities and estuaries.

The Bahamas has adopted a voluntary Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries which sets out principles and international standards of behaviour for responsible practices with a view to ensuring the effective conservation, management and development of living aquatic resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity.

The Department of Fisheries is working diligently to ensure sustainable economic development through integrated marine and coastal planning and resource management.

Commercial fishing within the 200 mile exclusive fishing zone is reserved for Bahamian nationals. With the ever increasing demand for certain species, a number of projects have been undertaken to optimise sustainably the yield while not endangering future harvesting of crawfish, stone crab and conch fisheries.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: The Ministry of Finance and Planning is responsible for overall planning; the Department of Fisheries for marine resources; the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Department of Agriculture for wetlands; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has certain responsibilities for the Economic Zone; the Departments of Lands and Surveys, Public Works and Port are all involved with aspects of coastal management. They are all members of the BEST Commission which is responsible for coordinating sustainable development activities.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: No information.

3. Major Groups: Major Groups participate fully at the national level and in the private sector. At the local level, small-scale artisanal fishermen participate on an ad hoc basis.

4. Finance: No information.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The dumping of sewage, garbage, etc., from cruise and cargo ships is an ongoing problem for The Bahamas. While discussions with such companies are frequent, and heavy fines are imposed if detected, policing 100,000 sq.mi. of water is virtually impossible. Recommendation has been made for The Bahamas to become party to the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas when finalized. The Bahamas is currently honouring the provision of the Code of Conduct of Responsible Fishing. It participates actively in the International Coral Reef Initiative, and other scientific activities of the Commonwealth Secretariat, OAS, UNESCO, UNEP, etc. The Bahamas has undertaken climate change activities through the UNEP/GEF Caribbean Adaption to Climate Change Project and the World Meteorological Organization. Ii is actively involved in activities under the Convention on Biological Diversity, including UNEP/GEF Biodiversity Country Study, the Biodiversity Data Management Project and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1980	1990	Latest 199-
Catches of marine species (metric tons)	5,026	7,547	
Population in coastal areas			
Population served by waste water treatment (% of country's total population)			15%
Discharges of oil into coastal waters (metric tons)			
Releases of phosphate into coastal waters (metric tons)			
Releases of nitrate into coastal waters (metric tons)			
Other data: Limited work has been undertaken to develop indicators, e.g. algae index.			

Chapter 17 (Oceans) Continued:

Check the boxes in the column below left:
For level of importance use:
*** = very important
** = important
* = not important
N = not relevant

Check the boxes in the column below right:
For level of implementation use:
*** = fully covered
** = well covered - gaps being addressed
* = poorly covered
O = not covered
N = not relevant

TABLE I. THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE APPROPRIATE COORDINATING MECHANISM FOR INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COASTAL AND MARINE AREAS AND THEIR RESOURCES.

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE	ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED IN AGENDA 21	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION
***	a. Preparation and implementation of land and water use and siting policies.	*
***	b. Implementation of integrated coastal and marine management and sustainable development plans and programmes at appropriate levels.	*
***	c. Preparation of coastal profiles identifying critical areas including eroded zones, physical processes, development patterns, user conflicts and specific priorities for management.	**
***	d. Prior environmental impact assessment, systematic observation and follow-up of major projects, including systematic incorporation of results in decision-making.	*
**	e. Contingency plans for human induced and natural disasters.	*
***	f. Improvement of coastal human settlements, especially in housing, drinking water and treatment and disposal of sewage, solid wastes and industrial effluents.	**
**	g. Periodic assessment of the impacts of external factors and phenomena to ensure that the objectives of integrated management and sustainable development of coastal areas and marine environment are met.	*
**	h. Conservation and restoration of altered critical habitats.	*
***	I. Integration of sectoral programmes on sustainable development for settlements, agriculture, tourism, fishing, ports and industries affecting the coastal areas.	*
**	J. Infrastructure adaptation and alternative employment.	O
***	K. Human resource development and training.	*
***	L. Public education, awareness and information programmes.	**
***	M. Promoting environmentally sound technology and sustainable practices.	**
***	N. Development and simultaneous implementation of environmental quality criteria.	*

TABLE II. TECHNOLOGY (MARINE ENVIRONMENT)

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE	ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED IN AGENDA 21	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION
**	A. Apply preventive, precautionary and anticipatory approaches so as to avoid degradation of the marine environment, as well as to reduce the risk of long-term or irreversible adverse effects upon it.	*
***	B. Ensure prior assessment of activities that may have significant adverse impacts upon the marine environment.	*
***	C. Integrate protection of the marine environment into relevant general environmental, social and economic development policies.	**
***	D. Develop economic incentives, where appropriate, to apply clean technologies and other means consistent with the internalization of environmental costs, such as the polluter pays principle, so as to avoid degradation of the marine environment.	*
**	E. Improve the living standards of coastal populations, particularly in developing countries, so as to contribute to reducing the degradation of the coastal and marine environment.	**
***	F. Effective monitoring and surveillance within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of fish harvesting and transportation of toxic and other hazardous materials.	*

TABLE III. SEWAGE RELATED ISSUES

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE	ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED IN AGENDA 21	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION
***	A. Sewage related problems are considered when formulating or reviewing coastal development plans, including human development plans.	*
***	B. Sewage treatment facilities are built in accordance with national policies.	*
***	C. Coastal outfalls are located so as to maintain acceptable level of environmental quality and to avoid exposing shell fisheries, water intakes and bathing areas to pathogens.	**
**	D. The Government promotes primary treatment of municipal sewage discharged to rivers, estuaries and the sea, or other solutions appropriate to specific sites.	**
**	E. The Government supports the establishment and improvement of local, national, subregional and regional, as necessary, regulatory and monitoring programmes to control effluent discharge. Minimum sewage effluent guidelines and water quality criteria are in use.	**

TABLE IV. OTHER SOURCES OF MARINE POLLUTION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS:

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE	ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED IN AGENDA 21	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION
**	A. Established or improved upon, as necessary, regulatory and monitoring programmes to control emissions, including recycling technologies.	*
***	B. Promoted risk and environmental impact assessments to help ensure an acceptable level of environmental quality.	
**	C. Promoted assessment and cooperation at the regional level, where appropriate, with respect to the input of point source pollutants from the marine environment.	*
**	D. Taken steps to eliminate emissions or discharges of organohalogen compounds from the marine environment.	*
**	E. Taken steps to eliminate/reduce emissions or discharges or other synthetic organic compounds from the marine environment.	*
**	F. Promoted controls over anthropogenic inputs of nitrogen and phosphorous that enter coastal waters where such problems as eutrophication threaten the marine environment or its resources.	*
**	G. Taken steps to develop and implement environmentally sound land-use techniques and practices to reduce run-off to water courses and estuaries which would cause pollution or degradation of the marine environment.	*
***	H. Promoted the use of environmentally less harmful pesticides and fertilizers and alternative methods for pest control, and considered the prohibition of those found to be environmentally unsound.	**
**	I. Adopted new initiatives at national, subregional and regional levels for controlling the input of non-point source pollutants which require broad changes in sewage and waste management, agricultural practices, mining, construction and transportation.	*
**	J. Taken steps to control and prevent coastal erosion and siltation due to anthropogenic factors related to, inter alia, land-use and construction techniques and practices.	*

TABLE V. ADDRESSING CRITICAL UNCERTAINTIES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE. IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROGRAMME AREA THE GOVERNMENT IS CARRYING OUT THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE	ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED IN AGENDA 21	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION
***	A. Coordinating national and regional observation programmes for coastal and near-shore phenomena related to climate change and for research parameters essential for marine and coastal management in all regions.	*
**	B. Providing improved forecasts of marine conditions for the safety of inhabitants of coastal areas and for the efficiency of marine operations.	*
***	C. Adopting special measures to cope with and adapt to potential climate change and sea-level rise.	*
***	D. Participating in coastal vulnerability assessment, modelling and response strategies particularly for priority areas, such as small islands and low-lying and critical coastal areas.	*
***	E. Identifying ongoing and planned programmes of systematic observation of the marine environment, with a view to integrating activities and establishing priorities to address critical uncertainties for oceans and all seas.	*
***	F. Research to determine the marine biological effects of increased levels of ultraviolet rays due to the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer.	O
***	G. Carrying out analysis, assessments and systematic observation of the role of oceans as a carbon sink.	O

TABLE VI. RATING OF ACTIVITIES IN THE AIR AND MARITIME TRANSPORT SECTORS IN THE SMALL ISLANDS DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

AIR TRANSPORT	RATING	MARITIME TRANSPORT	RATING
1. Frequency (external flights)		1. Frequency (external shipping)	HIGH
2. Frequency (in-country flights)		2. Frequency (in-country shipping)	HIGH
3. Cooperation at regional level in air transport and civil aviation		3. Cooperation at regional level in shipping	GOOD
4. Cooperation at international level		4. Cooperation at international level	GOOD
5. Economic viability of national air line		5. Economic viability of national shipping line(s)	SATISFACT.
6. Economic viability of regional air line		6. Economic viability of regional shipping line (s)	N/A
7. national level training in skills for air transport sector		7. National level training in skills for maritime transport sector	LOW
8. Access to training in skills for air transport sector within the region		8. Regional level training in skills for maritime transport sector	FAIR
9. Access to international training for air transport sector		9. Access to international training for maritime transport sector	GOOD
10. Supportive of ICAO			

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 18: PROTECTION OF THE QUALITY AND SUPPLY OF FRESHWATER RESOURCES: APPLICATION OF INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO THE DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND USE OF WATER RESOURCES

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: The Bahamas comprises several hundred low lying limestone islands which are well suited to, and heavily dependant on the tourism industry. Unfortunately water supplies and liquid waste disposal present serious problems in such an environment, and these have impacted on the economic development of the islands. Specific problem areas include the availability and distribution of freshwater resources. Water systems are difficult and costly to develop, and few residential communities can afford the full cost of water supplied by alternate methods such as reverse osmosis. Groundwater resources in this environment are also very prone to human abuse, and they are exceedingly vulnerable to pollution. Mistakes have been made which have resulted in serious long-term damage. Liquid and solid wastes are difficult to manage and dispose of, and appropriate technology needs to be applied where conventional methods are found to be unsatisfactory.

Groundwater resources: The quantified freshwater resources of thirteen of the larger islands of the Commonwealth comprise 28% of their total land area. The groundwater resources of the Commonwealth are comprised of the fresh, brackish, saline and hypersaline water found in the shallow and deep subsurface, and in the lakes and ponds that occur on the surface. The freshwater resources occur as three dimensional lens-shaped bodies which float on and overlie brackish and saline water. These lenses do not occur in subterranean lakes, rivers, or ponds. Groundwater permeates the rock and all its pores, fissures and interconnected cavities. More than 90% of the freshwater lenses are within five feet of the surface. The low lying nature of the islands, and the narrow unsaturated zone between the groundwater and the surface, render the freshwater lenses highly susceptible to contamination by pollutants percolating down to the water table. Industrial pollutants, solid wastes and sewerage discharges in cesspools, septic tanks, pit latrines and disposal wells, endanger the purity of the water, and, when it is used without disinfection, poses a serious health hazard. Urban, agricultural and industrial encroachment into public wellfields poses an additional hazard. The lack of centralized wastewater treatment facilities results in approximately 90% of the residents using septic tanks. Along with the high number of private water supply wells, estimated at between 12,000 and 20,000, this makes the largest threat to water quality be that of human origin.

Sewerage: In The Bahamas there are sewer collection systems serving approximately one fifth of the capital Nassau; on the other islands these are limited to a few small subdivisions and some private developments and hotels. Septic tanks are used most commonly on the major islands though these do not always conform to the Building Code and therefore may not function in the manner that they should. In the less developed areas pit latrines may be used and there are some places where direct discharge to the sea is still used as a means of disposing of wastes. The use of septic tanks is usually combined with a drain field or disposal wall. Where sewerage mains exist the wastes are normally treated to primary or secondary levels, and the effluent is then disposed of in a deep disposal well. Many different types of deep disposal wells are utilized discharging a wide variety of liquid wastes. The wells that are used to dispose of large volumes of effluent are normally cased down to about 200 metres and are open below this depth. Tourist areas usually include golf courses, and these require considerable volumes of irrigation water. In such situations the wastewater from the hotels is usually treated and reused on a nearby golf course. The waste disposal methods used in The Bahamas are presently far from satisfactory, and studies have shown that the groundwater underlying urbanized areas shows relatively high levels of pollution. There is also evidence of sea-water pollution, particularly in some enclosed harbours which are important tourist destinations or may be involved in the seafood industry.

Other chemical and mineral wastes: The disposal of organic wastes and use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides in addition to waste or spilled petroleum products and discharges from industrial and food processing operations impact water quality and are a cause of concern. Contaminated water from these sources drains directly to the water table as storm water runoff. These concerns are heightened in the environment as a result of a lack of controls, and the adequate regulation of drilling companies and the absence of appropriate groundwater regulations. Fuel and oil spills have become a common feature of groundwater contamination complaints, and the reported spills range in volume from several hundreds of gallons to one spill that leaked over a ten year period in excess of one million US gallons.

Water supplies: Groundwater resources in the Bahamas have always been easy to exploit, and regular usage dates back to the earliest settlers. Today, water is still privately obtained by bucket from shallow hand-dug wells; public supplies are obtained from mechanically cut trenches, pits and seasonal freshwater marshes.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: Experience has shown that adequate legislation and regulation are required to control and protect water resources. An institutional structure that can administer and enforce the fair use of these resources is needed. In small island states all those involved in the environment and water supply sector have to work diligently to make the public aware of the issues involved, and the potential consequences of inaction, so that the public will accept whatever measures need to be taken to safeguard the future. There are many existing laws and regulations that impinge upon the use of water. There are, however, no regulations that control the use of groundwater or enable this resource to be appropriately administered. Efforts are in hand to achieve this, but more needs to be done to obtain full Government support and make such regulations acceptable to the general public.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: The ability of Government agencies to conduct groundwater risk assessment projects and study the effects of agriculture requires strengthening. In addition, there is a need to develop a national capacity to develop and maintain a regulatory framework to control the water sector.

3. Major Groups: Included in the private sector are, inter alia, the Bahamas National Trust Fund and the Grand Bahama Port Authority.

4. Finance: Bilateral funding is being sought to assist in the development of a regulatory framework in The Bahamas.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The Bahamas Land Resources Study (BLRS) continues to be the benchmark evaluation of the country's natural resources, including its groundwater. With the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the Water and Sewerage Corporation has prepared a framework for the long-term sustainable development of these resources and there is an ongoing need to upgrade these data and extend them to include non-potable water resources. Because small island states find it difficult to have the necessary knowledge in the wide range disciplines that can impact on their sustained economic development, there is a need for international assistance in research and development.
The Bahamas participates in WMO's efforts in the water sector regionally and internationally. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) also assists in water quality and water resources issues.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1980	1990	1996	
Fresh water availability (total domestic/external in million m^3)	2,004	2,004	2,004	
Annual withdrawal of freshwater as % of available water	3	5	5	
Other data				

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 19: ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF TOXIC CHEMICALS, INCLUDING PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN TOXIC AND DANGEROUS PRODUCTS

NATIONAL PRIORITY:	
STATUS REPORT: The Bahamas has made a provision under the Environmental Health Act (1987) for regulations governing the manufacture, disposal and use of toxic wastes. These regulations are currently in draft form. Traditionally, there has been no regulatory mechanism designating restricted or prohibited chemicals for import or use in The Bahamas. In order to address this deficiency, The Bahamas is presently investigating the establishment of a permit system for the control of hazardous and toxic chemicals.	

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: At present, there are no mechanisms in place to address designating restricted or prohibited chemicals. The BEST Commission is responsible for all coordinating activities related to the environment while the Department of Environmental Health Services (DEHS), Bahamas Customs and Excise and the Ministry of Agriculture all play a role in the day-to-day monitoring and investigation of related problems.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: DEHS recognises the need for more specialised training in order to evaluate and address issues related to the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals. To this end, emphasis is being placed on further specialised training for staff.

3. Major Groups: No information.

4. Finance: No information.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The Bahamas has participated in the first Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an Internationally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 20: ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF HAZARDOUS WASTES, INCLUDING PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN HAZARDOUS WASTES

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT:

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was ratified in 1992.

Additional comments relevant to this chapter

The Bahamas is largely dependent on groundwater for agricultural, domestic and industrial water supplies and as such there is great concern about the possibility of its contamination from improper management. Hazardous waste and its management are not specifically dealt with in the existing Bahamian Legislation, however, Hazardous Materials Regulations are being drafted. The Environmental Act of 1987 gives the Department of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) the authority to control the use, manufacture and disposal of toxic chemicals and the responsibility for hazardous waste management.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. Decision-Making Structure: The Department of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) is responsible for the daily monitoring of activities in this area and environmentally related issues. DEHS is represented on the BEST Commission and is a full-fledged member of the National Coordination Mechanism for Sustainable Development. National legislation to protect the environment, inclusive hazardous waste, has been drafted and is awaiting approval.

2. Capacity-Building/Technology Issues: The Department of Environmental Health Services, being aware of the widening scope of environmental health and The Bahamas' involvement in international agreements, has made a concerted effort to increase its staff of qualified inspectors. It is anticipated that an additional eight officers with professional qualifications will be added to the staff. Two officers will be returning from advanced studies abroad in May 1997. The increase in qualified staff will allow for closer monitoring of issues such as solid and hazardous waste management.

3. Major Groups: No information.

4. Finance: The estimated cost of operation and maintenance of hazardous waste facilities to be provided during the next two years is in excess of $2.5 million. It is anticipated that financial aid will be received from international organisations.

5. Regional/International Cooperation: The Bahamas is (a) a signatory to the Basel Convention, (b) participating actively in meetings related to various aspects of the Basel Convention, (c) participating in negotiations for a treaty on liability and compensation for damage resulting from transboundary movements of waste, (d) serving, for the fourth year, as a chair of the Committee for the Implementation of the Basel Convention, and (e) participating in the discussions on the Regional centre for Training and Technology Transfer.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1980	1990	1996
Generation of hazardous waste			725,000 gal[1]
Import of hazardous wastes (t)			
Export of hazardous wastes (t)			
Area of land contaminated by hazardous waste (km^2)			
Expenditure on hazardous waste treatment (US$)			

[1] This figure is from a preliminary study, but The Bahamas will conduct a more detailed survey of hazardous waste during 1997-1998.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 21: ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTES AND SEWAGE-RELATED ISSUES

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: Disposing of garbage and sewage is particularly difficult for small islands. Increasing amounts of waste, resulting from growing consumption and urbanization, have frequently led to pollution of lagoons and oceans, and contamination of ground water. Limited land areas make the option of landfill unsustainable in the longterm. The disposal of toxic and hazardous or radioactive waste by other countries on small islands has also generated much concern. Their isolation and dependence on marine and land resources make small islands highly vulnerable to contamination. The Bahamas ha for several years had a policy of not accepting waste of any kind to be imported into the country.

This is regardless of whether it is for disposal or recycling. Solid waste management in the Bahamas has historically been plagued with several major problems, including: (1) poor equipment which has been highlighted by bad purchasing decisions and which cause repair difficulties, keeping equipment out of service for long periods of time; (2) gross under-funding; (3) lac. of properly trained management and technical staff; (4) a poorly organized system of waste storage and lack of waste separation at source; (5) an inefficient system of revenue management and collection from commercial customers; (6) a poorly designed disposal site layout.

The recent change in the Government policy towards solid waste and the change in management structure has allowed for a more realistic budget for the management of the service. This has resulted in more operational equipment and better trained personnel and a better and a more broadly based management structure for the Division, with the separation of cleaning of public areas from waste collection. Consideration now has to be given to re-introducing some cleaning aspects, a surve to categorize the waste has been done and a system for involving the private sector is being finalized; and a detailed plan for the layout and management of the disposal site is under development.

A major pre-investment study of waste disposal has been completed by the Inter-American Development Bank. It is proposed that a nation wide waste disposal project will be established to address all areas of this problem.

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** No information.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** No information.

3. **Major Groups:** No information.

4. **Finance:** No information.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** The following actions have been taken: 1) The Bahamas was a leader at the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, on the transfer of hazardous wastes from developed to developing countries; 2) The Bahamas is actively participating in the negotiations for a treaty on liability and compensation for damage caused by transboundary movements of wastes; 3) The Bahamas is presently Chair of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Committee of the Extended Bureau of the Convention and has been asked to chair the Implementation Committee of the Convention.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1980	1990	Latest 199-	
Generation of industrial and municipal waste (t)				
Waste disposed(Kg/capita)				
Expenditure on waste collection and treatment (US$)				
Waste recycling rates (%)				
Municipal waste disposal (Kg/capita)				
Waste reduction rates per unit of GDP (t/year)				
Other data				

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 22: SAFE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES

NATIONAL PRIORITY:	
STATUS REPORT: No information.	

Cross-Sectoral Issues

1. **Decision-Making Structure:** No information.

2. **Capacity-Building/Technology Issues:** No information.

3. **Major Groups:** No information.

4. **Finance:** No information.

5. **Regional/International Cooperation:** No information.

BAHAMAS

AGENDA 21 CHAPTERS 23-32: MAJOR GROUPS

The role of major groups are also covered under the various chapters of Agenda 21. The following is a summary of main objectives outlined in Agenda 21. Please check the appropriate boxes and describe briefly any important steps or obstacles.

STATUS REPORT ON PARTICIPATION BY MAJOR GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS	
Ch. 24: GLOBAL ACTION FOR WOMEN TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was ratified on 6 October 1993. **24.a** Increasing the proportion of women decision makers. From 1992 to 1996, the percentage of women in government (Permanent Secretary) increased from 38% to 61%, their percentage in parliament (Members of Parliament) increased from 8% to 15% and remained at 23% in cabinet (Cabinet Ministers). At the local government level, the percentage of women decision makers was 20% in 1996. **24.b** assessing, reviewing, revising and implementing curricula and other educational material with a view to promoting dissemination of gender-relevant knowledge. Curricula and educational material are being revised. **24.c and 24.d** formulating and implementing policies, guidelines, strategies and plans for achievement of equality in all aspects of society including issuing a strategy by year 2000 to eliminate obstacles to full participation of women in sustainable development. Policies/strategies etc. will be in place by 2000. **24.e** establishing mechanisms by 1995 to assess implementation and impact of development and environment policies and programmes on women Mechanisms are being developed. **Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):** No further information.	

STATUS REPORT ON PARTICIPATION BY MAJOR GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Ch. 25: CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

25.a establishing processes that promote dialogue between the youth and government at all levels and mechanisms that permit youth access to information and opportunity to present their views on implementing A21.

Name relevant youth fora (3-4 most important):

1.
2.
3.
4.

Describe their role in the national process:

Youth participates on an ad hoc basis in the national process.

25.b reducing youth unemployment

No information.

25.c ensuring that by year 2000 more than 50% of youth -- gender balanced -- have access to appropriate secondary education or vocational training.

The goal set in Agenda 21 has been reached.

Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):

No further information.

STATUS REPORT ON PARTICIPATION BY MAJOR GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Ch. 26: RECOGNIZING AND STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

26.a establishing a process to empower indigenous people and their communities -- through policies and legal instruments:

Not relevant.

26.b strengthening arrangements for active participation in national policies

Not relevant.

26.c involving indigenous people in resource management strategies and programmes at the national and local level.

Not relevant.

Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):

Not relevant.

STATUS REPORT ON PARTICIPATION BY MAJOR GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Ch. 27: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

27.a developing mechanisms that allow NGOs to play their partnership role responsibly and effectively.
27.b reviewing formal procedures and mechanisms to involve NGOs in decision making and implementation.
27.c promoting and allowing NGOs to participate in the conception, establishment and evaluation of official mechanisms to review Agenda 21 implementation.

Mechanisms exist already, NGOs are participating fully and their inputs are important.

27.d establishing a mutually productive dialogue by 1995 at the national level between NGOs and governments.

Financial constraints prevent major groups from participating in the national delegation to the CSD and major conferences. When the subject is relevant, an NGO is permitted to represent The Bahamas in place of a Government official.

Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):

The primary NGO which actively participates in programmes for sustainable development is The Bahamas National Trust (BNT). The BNT, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1959, is a self-funded NGO. It represents a unique collaboration of governmental, private sector and scientific interests dedicated to the conservation of the natural and historic resources of The Bahamas for the enjoyment and benefit of the Bahamian people. The Trust has made major contributions to the environmental process in The Bahamas by:

- Managing the National Park System of The Bahamas, as mandated by Act of Parliament. There are at present 12 National Parks and Protected Areas, and the Trust is developing recommendations for 52 additional parks sites to protect the country's biodiversity and significant historic and natural resources.
- Preparing a proposal for The Bahamas National Strategy for Environment and Development.
- Submitting recommendations, at the request of the Government, for the promotion of ecotourism and protection of the country's tourism product.
- Conducting an initial assessment of the feasibility of establishing protected areas within the Andros Barrier Reef System.
- Submitting recommendations on Bahamas fisheries regulations, including a successful campaign to halt long line fishing methods in territorial waters.
- Serving on the Board of Directors of The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission (BEST) Executive Director).
- Developing and monitoring the successful management of the white-crowned pigeon gamebird population.

STATUS REPORT ON PARTICIPATION BY MAJOR GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Ch. 28: LOCAL AUTHORITIES' INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF AGENDA 21.

28.a encouraging local authorities to implement and monitor programmes that aim to ensure participation of women and youth in local decision making.
The Government supports local agenda 21 initiatives.

Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):

No further information.

Ch. 29: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WORKERS AND THEIR TRADE UNIONS.
29.a full participation of workers in implementation and evaluation of A21.
29.b (By year 2000, (a) promoting ratification of ILO conventions; (b) establishing bipartite and tripartite mechanism on safety, health and sustainable development; (c) increasing number of environmental collective agreements; (d) reducing occupational accidents and injuries; (e) increasing workers' education and training efforts.

ILO Conventions have been ratified. Workers do not yet participate in National Agenda 21 discussions/implementation.

Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):

No further information.

STATUS REPORT ON PARTICIPATION BY MAJOR GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

30: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY.

30.a increasing the efficiency of resource use, including reuse, recycling, and reduction of waste per unit of economic output.

There are governmental policies encouraging the above objective.

30.b encouraging the concept of stewardship in management and use of natural resources by entrepreneurs.

List any actions taken in this area:

No information.

30.c increasing number of enterprises that subscribe to and implement sustainable development policies.
Most big enterprises and a few small and medium sized enterprises have adopted sustainable development policies.

Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):
The Bahamas National Trust is a full member of the National Sustainable Development Coordination Mechanism. The Bahamas Council of Light Industries, the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce, the Bahamas Institute of Prof. Engineers and the Grand Bahamas Port Authority are all advisory and ad-hoc members of the National Sustainable Development Coordination Mechanism. Oil companies, labour unions and others are not members of this coordination mechanism. Major group organizations participate in environmental impact assessment projects at the national and local level. The Government sent representatives from major groups to the SIDS Global Meeting in Barbados, in November 1994.

Having studied the effect of Major Group investment in other countries, the Government decided to cede full responsibility for the management of its National Land and Marine Parks to the Bahamas National Trust. Local major groups and the Bahamas National Trust have given constructive, helpful and essential contributions to national sustainable development initiatives and activities.

STATUS REPORT ON PARTICIPATION BY MAJOR GROUPS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Ch. 31: SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY.

31.a improving exchange of knowledge and concerns between s&t community and the general public.
Scientific community has already established ways in which to address the general public and deal with sustainable development.

The BEST Commission has established a Science and Technology Committee to address these issues.

31.b developing, improving and promoting international acceptance of codes of practice and guidelines related to science and technology and its role in reconciling environment and development.

Brief comments on this chapter not already described in chapter 35 (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):

No further comments.

Ch. 32: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF FARMERS.

32.a promoting and encouraging sustainable farming practices and technologies.

32.b developing a policy framework that provides incentives and motivation among farmers for sustainable and efficient farming practices.

32.c enhancing participation of organizations of farmers in design and implementation of sustainable development policies.

Brief comments on this chapter (maximum 100 words) (please, do not exceed this page):

No information.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 33: FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MECHANISMS

Financial resources and mechanisms are also covered under each sectoral chapter of Agenda 21 where relevant. This summary highlights broader national financial policies, domestic and external (including ODA)

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT: Since 1992, the Government of The Bahamas has received new additional grant funding for sustainable development as follows:

- GEF via UNEP US$ eq.400,000.
- GEF via UNEP US$ eq. 150,000. UNEP has advised that preliminary approval of this amount will be awarded to the Bahamas for the development of a National Strategy on Biological Diversity.
- GEF via Caricom/OAS US$ eq.500,000. This amount may be awarded to The Bahamas via the GEF project "Caribbean: Adaption to Climate Change".
- GEF via UNEP US$ eq.20,000, to be awarded to assist in conducting the Ozone Country Study.
- CFTC US$ eq.50,000.

CHANGES IN NATIONAL BUDGET TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: While activities are woven into the budgets of many Departments and Ministries, it is impossible to give a specific amount. There is no separate budget for sustainable development per se.

NEW ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS: In late 1995, an Environmental Court was established where those found guilty of environmental abuse will be prosecuted and heavily fined.

ELIMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY UNFRIENDLY SUBSIDIES:

ODA policy issues
Recipient

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS						
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	
ODA funding provided or received (Total US$million)						
	Average for 92-93		Average for 94-96			
Net flow of external capital from all sources as % of GDP						
Other data						

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 34: TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGY, COOPERATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building is also covered under each sectoral chapter of Agenda 21 where relevant. This summary highlights broader national policies and actions relating to chapter 34.

NATIONAL PRIORITY:	
STATUS REPORT ON LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION NETWORKS/SYSTEMS: No information. **MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION:**	

- Describe any work being undertaken at the national or local level regarding efforts to promote clean production processes and/or the concepts of eco-efficiency. These processes may include training, preferential financial arrangements, information dissemination and changes in legal or regulatory frameworks.

- Provide information on the adoption of environmental management systems. National reaction to environmental management system standards such as the ISO 14000 Series and others. Please note efforts made at the national level to promote their adoption and the creation of certification infrastructure in order to facilitate access to these standards to local industry.

- List and describe programs or work under way to facilitate the transfer of ESTs to small and medium sized enterprises. Please note efforts to facilitate access to financial resources and other transfer strategies.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 35: SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT ON NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH NEEDS AND PRIORITIES:

The Bahamas does not possess the human and financial resources to expand and further develop the sustainable use of its natural resources. Collaborative efforts in marine and terrestrial ecology, geology and hydrogeology help to expand The Bahamas' scientific knowledge. Research activity is largely driven from the point at which non-national academic priorities and the interest of The Bahamas coincide. The Bahamas Government provides logistical support in exchange for the sharing of the results of the academic findings of reputable international scientific endeavours.

The Bahamas presently has limited access to scientific information, but increasingly the value and importance of accessing the Internet, and the availability of information on BioNet, CARINET and other regional networks is being recognised.

STEPS TAKEN TO ENHANCE SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING, IMPROVE LONG TERM SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT, BUILDING OF CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY:

Research permits are required for scientist wishing to carry out ecological and biological research in The Bahamas, and several research stations already exist (in San Salvador and North Andros for example). Increasingly, a local training component is being included in the proposals, and permit holders are sending back to The Bahamas reports and thesis etc. The stock of local information is therefore increasing.

The Bahamas will in 1997 produce a metadatabase of existing scientific information on Bahamian Biodiversity through the GEF funded Biodiversity Data Management Project. The metadatabase is expected to indicate the coverage of various scientific research efforts. It is anticipated that the project will also provide indication of where efforts are required to address deficiencies and assign scientific research efforts in the future.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS			
		Year	
Number of scientists, engineers and technicians engaged in research and experimental development	#	19--	
Total expenditure for research and experimental development (US$eq.)	$	19--	

Other data:

Approximately five to ten scientists are engaged in research and experimental development through activities sponsored by the College of The Bahamas. This includes work conducted both within the College's confines and in the field station it maintains on San Salvador, the Island which was the first landfall of Columbus in the New World.

In addition, it is estimated that on an annual basis 10 to 30 persons assist indirectly in efforts sponsored and funded by academic efforts in various scientific endeavours covering the marine and terrestrial environment.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 36: PROMOTING EDUCATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS AND TRAINING

NATIONAL PRIORITY: High

STATUS REPORT: The Bahamas has a national strategy on education. The existing Ministry of Education Committee consists of technical officers in science, the Bahamas National Trust and the Bahamas Reef Environment Education Foundation. The BEST Commission's Education and Public Awareness Committee will consist of Commission members and a cross section of individuals from throughout the country, including women, men, NGO's and technical officers of Government agencies. They will assist with the development of resource materials and teacher upgrading in schools. The Ministry of Education and Training encourages partnerships, mobilizes resources, provides information, assesses the needs of different population groups and prepares a National Education Strategy. At the primary and secondary school level, school curricula have been reviewed and revised to adequately address environment and development as a cross-cutting issue. Tools for environmental education like printed material, audio visual tools and special classes/workshops/seminars have been occasionally used at primary and secondary level. Tools are used to supplement/reinforce the curriculum that incorporates environmental education; wider use is encouraged. With the establishment of the BEST Commission and in response to the Government's intensified efforts in this area, members of the Commission, intend to mount a public awareness programme, involving TV, radio and press. The BEST plans to work with MOET/COB to expand materials and subjects in curricula to be a permanent part of education in The Bahamas, including curricula for teachers trained at the College of the Bahamas, so that they in turn will be sensitized and committed to teaching these principles when they graduate and enter the school system.

The UN agencies have supported educational programmes on environment and sustainable development issues by providing public awareness information on environmental issues, but more UN support is needed. Schools and universities are part of a national network addressing environment and development issues.

At the national level, there is an association of NGO's, including the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), the Bahamas Reef Environmental Education Foundation (BREEF) and Friends of the Environment Conservation Groups, that provide educational upgrading for teachers and students via resource materials, workshops, field trips and assistance with science clubs. Recently, a scholarship for teachers' upgrading in an environmental education workshop was granted. Funding for teacher and student attendance to the global youth forum (UNEP) and UN conferences is also given periodically. At the primary and secondary school levels environmental health, sanitation, ecosystems, recycling and energy saving are dealt in part, and safe drinking water and food are dealt with fully.

a) **Reorientation of education towards sustainable development** See above.

b) **Increasing public awareness** Radio and television broadcasts and in-service workshops on environmental education for school administrators, parents and teachers are used by the MOET Committee. The BEST Committee will use Internet, television, radio and the press for public awareness and intends to co-author pamphlets and other materials which relate exclusively to the Bahamian children and the need for sustainable development to protect their heritage.

c) **Promoting training** See under STATUS REPORT.

ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS: See under STATUS Report and FINANCING.

FINANCING AND COST EVALUATION OF THE LABOUR ACTIVITIES: Women work in many non-traditional jobs. The evening classes of educational institutions are heavily attended by young and middle aged women taking advantage of the courses offered. Legislation to affirm the rights of indigenous people to play a part in education and training in environmental and development issues being enacted. Pre-service and in-service training programmes are available for teachers, administrators, educational planners and non-formal educators in all sectors concerning the nature and methods of environmental and developing education. Environmental workshops, seminars, on-site supervision, field trips etc. are conducted and facilitated by NGO's and technical officers.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS				
	1980	1990	Latest 199-	
Adult literacy rate (%) Male				
Adult literacy rate (%) Female				
% of primary school children reaching grade 5 (1986-97)				
Mean number of years of schooling				
% of GNP spent on education				
Females per 100 males in secondary school				
Women per 100 men in the labour force				
Other data				

	First or Primary school level (%)		Second/Secondary school level (%)		Vocational schools		College/University level		Footnotes below
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1980	50.0	50.0	48.2	51.8					
1990	51.3	48.7	49.0	51.0					
Latest 199-	50.7	49.3	50.2	49.8					

First/Primary school covers ages 5 to 11+
Second/Secondary school covers ages 11+ to 17+

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 37: NATIONAL MECHANISMS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

National capacity building is also covered under sectoral chapters.
Donors: You may wish to describe here how Agenda 21 has influenced your ODA policies in this area.
Developing countries: You may wish to describe any new national mechanisms for capacity building - and any changes in technical cooperation.

NATIONAL PRIORITY:

STATUS REPORT ON NATIONAL ENDOGENOUS CAPACITY BUILDING:

No information.

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 38: INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Ch. 38: Brief summary of any particular UN System response affecting this country/state:

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has provided considerable assistance in processing funding from the GEF for The Bahamas to meet its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the provisions of Agenda 21, through the following projects:

1. Bahamas Country Study on Biological Diversity	$150,000
2. Bahamas Biodiversity Data Management Project	$250,000
3. Bahamas National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan	$150,000
4. Caribbean: Adapting to Global Climate Change	$300,000 (est.)
5. Attendance at various international fora	$50,000

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 39: INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND MECHANISMS

Ch. 39: International Legal Instruments are covered under the relevant sectoral chapters. This is a listing of major agreements/conventions (not already covered) entered into and relevant to Agenda 21:

NATIONAL LEGISLATION:

- Archipelagic Waters and Maritime Jurisdiction Act, 1993
- Agriculture and Fisheries Act (Ch. 223), 1963
- Bahamas Agriculture and Industrial Corporation Act, (Ch. 328), 1981
- Bahamas Maritime Authority Act, 1995
- Bahamas National Trust Act (Ch. 335)
- Coast Protection Act (Ch. 190)
- Continental Shelf Act (Ch. 5)
- Environmental Health Services Act (Ch. 217)
- Fisheries Resources (Jurisdiction and Conservation) Act (Ch. 225)
- Fisheries Resources (Jurisdiction and Conservation) Act Amendment No.2, 1993
- Local Government Act 1996, Port Authorities Act
- Private Roads and Sub-Divisions Act (Ch. 237)
- Reclamation and Drainage Act
- Seal Fisheries Act
- Town Planning Act
- Plants Protection Act, 1916
- Water and Sewerage Corporation Act (Ch. 184)
- Whaling Industry (Regulation) Act
- Wild Bird Protection Act (Ch. 230)
- Wild Animals Protection Act (Ch. 229)

The following legislation about to be introduced relates to biodiversity conservation:

- Agriculture and Fisheries (Protected Areas) Rules, 1996
- Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Act
- Continuity of the Water and Sewerage Corporation
- Forestry Act
- Marine Mammal (Dolphin) Legislation
- Act to Regulate the Removal of Hills and Trees
- Tourism Incentives Act (Marinas, Environmental and Theme Park)

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS:

- Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean
- Protocol re Specially Protected Areas and Wild Life (SPAW)
- Protocol for Combating Oil Spills
- Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992
- Copenhagen Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 1992
- London Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 1990
- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, 1989
- Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, 1987
- Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, 1985
- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1986
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982
- Protocol to the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1976
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), 1973
- Protocol Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973
- Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil, 1954, and Amendments of 1969 and 1971
- International Convention for the Establishment of an International Compensation Fund for Oil Pollution Damage, 1971
- International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1969
- The Treaty re Principles Governing the Activities of States in Exploration and Use of Outer Space including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies, 1967
- Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelco), 1967
- Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere in Outer Space and Under Water, 1963

AGENDA 21 CHAPTER 40: INFORMATION FOR DECISION-MAKING

This chapter is also covered under sectoral and other chapters of this profile. The matrix below gives an overview of how national authorities rate the available information for decision making.

Rating of available data and information suitable for decision-making

Agenda 21 Chapters		Very good	Good	Some good data but many gaps	Poor	Remarks
2.	International cooperation and trade					
3.	Combating poverty					
4.	Changing consumption patterns					
5.	Demographic dynamics and sustainability					
6.	Human health					
7.	Human settlements					
8.	Integrating E & D in decision-making					
9.	Protection of the atmosphere					
10.	Integrated planning and management of land resources					
11.	Combating deforestation					
12.	Combating desertification and drought					
13.	Sustainable mountain development					
14.	Sustainable agriculture and rural development					
15.	Conservation of biological diversity	x				
16.	Biotechnology	x				
17.	Oceans, seas, coastal areas and their living resources					
18.	Freshwater resources					
19.	Toxic chemicals					
20.	Hazardous wastes					
21.	Solid wastes					
22.	Radioactive wastes					
24.	Women in sustainable development					
25.	Children and youth					
26.	Indigenous people					
27.	Non-governmental organizations					
28.	Local authorities					
29.	Workers and trade unions					
30.	Business and industry					
31.	Scientific and technological community					
32.	Farmers					
33.	Financial resources and mechanisms					
34.	Technology, cooperation and capacity-building					
35.	Science for sustainable development					
36.	Education, public awareness and training					
37.	International cooperation for capacity-building					
38.	International institutional arrangements					
39.	International legal instruments					
40.	Information for decision-making					

Additional Comments

The public sector is experiencing a process of adjustment, driven by the need to acknowledge the facility with which information can be accessed and manipulated. Emphasis is placed on structures that merge information, knowledge and action. As information technology explodes, greater specialization is needed to master these changes, while at the same time greater teamwork is required to recombine it into meaningful output. Rapid response requires leanness in the organizations. In this context, The Bahamas supports the development of a Small Island Developing States Information Network (SID/NET) to facilitate the exchange of experience among islands.

The Government does not have a programme to develop or use indicators of sustainable development at the national, regional, or international levels. The BEST Commission is involved in the work on indicators of sustainable development, but work has just begun. There has been an effort to establish an overall policy and framework for information at the national level, by integrating environment and development information. The agency which approves development proposals and The BEST Commission are both in the same office for that very reason. The Bahamas is currently conducting a Biodiversity Data Management Project to develop a data base to assist in the decision making process. The main sources of information on sustainable development are UN agencies.

STATISTICAL DATA/INDICATORS

	1989	1992	Latest 199-	
Number of telephones in use per 100 inhabitants	24.7	30.3		
Other data				